



SPRING 2024

LET'S PARTY

Hawaiian style!



Hold the front page:
the printing press
has arrived

**Paradise
gets festive**

New
**wellbeing
days** promote
healthy habits

Welcome

It's been an eventful few months for everyone here at Paradise House! Since we brought you the first edition of Paradise News in the summer, there's been a number of exciting new developments all geared towards helping residents live life to the full.

Firstly, we're delighted to welcome our new therapy manager Tash Martin who joined us in July. Since her arrival, Tash has set up six new courses ranging from money skills and basic cookery to friendship and communication groups. She's also behind the launch of our bimonthly wellbeing days which are designed to encourage residents to incorporate healthy practices into their daily routines. You can read more about Tash on Pages 8 and 9 of this issue.

"...and those who were here on Christmas Day celebrated with a hearty lunch, complete with all the trimmings"

In other news, we're also thrilled to bring you details of our new state of the art printing press which was installed in the art room over the autumn and has already been put to good use creating Christmas-themed cards, wrapping paper and tablecloths. Other imaginative printing projects are in the pipeline.

As part of our programme of festive activities, residents enjoyed pantomime performances of Peter Pan, Mother Goose, Snow White and Beauty and the Beast in Cheltenham, Swindon, Bristol, and Tewksbury. Our Christmas ball was also well attended and those who were here on Christmas Day celebrated with a hearty lunch, complete with all the trimmings, at a variety of Cotswold pubs and inns.

We hope you enjoy this edition. We look forward to bringing you more updates later in the year.



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LONDON CALLING

...all aboard for a trip to the capital!



A group of intrepid Paradise residents travelled to London for a whistle stop tour of the capital's top attractions.

Anna, Hils, Maxine and Carl – accompanied by Beth Law (Senior Adult Activity Co-ordinator), Alison Buckley (Senior Care Worker) and Julia Troy (Careworker) – took the train to Paddington Station for the three-night sightseeing trip.

The exciting itinerary included a tour of the Tower of London, a boat trip down the Thames with views of various famous landmarks, a visit to Madame Tussauds and a night at the theatre seeing the musical Wicked!

It was an action-packed schedule, ranging from visits to shopping centres and meals at restaurants and a riverside pub as well as a picnic in Regent's Park. There was also a well-earned takeaway and movie night at their well-appointed house in New Eltham. There was even time for Maxine to visit her mother in Sloane Square.

Julia said that the residents all agreed that they'd made the most of their time in London.

"We were all very impressed by the crown jewels at the Tower of London. Walking around the ramparts, we got a fantastic view of the city. We also saw the Beefeaters and the famous ravens," said Julia. "During the River Thames boat trip, we were treated to an excellent view of Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, St Paul's Cathedral and the London Eye."

Another highlight was visiting Madame Tussauds where residents were able to pose for photos with the lifelike wax celebrity figures including film and pop stars, superheroes, politicians and kings and queens. According to Julia, the performance of the smash hit musical Wicked was an unforgettable experience with everyone awarding top marks to the dancing, singing and special effects.

During the train journey home, everyone reflected on their time in the capital. "Maxine said she liked the crown jewels and having her photo taken with the King and Queen. Carl enjoyed the boat trip and riding on the tube train, and he liked the witch in Wicked," said Julia. "Anna was impressed by Michael Jackson and David Bowie at Madame Tussauds. Hils said she loved chatting to all the friendly people on the tube trains. Everyone appreciated the trip and thanked the staff for sharing the experience with them."

Walking in a winter wonderland



Kirsty Nageon Bishop and the residents made a sleigh in craft and textile sessions.

Paradise residents and staff celebrated the run up to Christmas at a dazzling winter wonderland-themed Ball complete with a showstopping festive sleigh!



The sleigh – created by the residents and Daytime Activities Leader Kirstie Nayegon-Bishop during art and textiles sessions – took centre stage in the Coach House which had been specially decorated for the occasion.

Dressed in party outfits, everyone took to the dance floor for the disco provided by Novalis electrician and DJ Mark Osgood who played all the residents' favourite tunes.

“Dressed in party outfits, everyone took to the dance floor for the disco...”

Beth Law (Senior Adult Activities Leader) said it was a memorable occasion which helped get everyone into the festive spirit. “The Coach House looked amazing thanks to

Megan and Donna from Ebley House,” she added. “We finished off with delicious mince pies and mulled wine which went down a treat.”

Groups of residents also attended pantomime performances of Peter Pan at the Bristol Hippodrome, Mother Goose at the Cheltenham Everyman, Snow White at the Wyvern Theatre in Swindon and Beauty and the Beast at the Roses in Tewkesbury.

“Visiting the panto was a great opportunity for everyone to connect with the wider community and share laughter and a feeling of togetherness” said Beth.

There was also an outing to the award-winning Christmas display at the Whitehall Garden Centre in Chippenham where everyone enjoyed getting up close to real reindeers Figgy and Puddy.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE ANIMAL KIND WITH ZOOLAB'S EMILY!

Did you know that rats are ticklish, snail slime makes an excellent moisturiser and frogs' skin has powerful antibacterial properties?

These are just a few of the amazing facts that Zoolab's ranger Emily shared when she came to Paradise's Main House for an engaging hands-on animal workshop with residents and staff.

The visit – organised by Paradise's OT placement student James England – involved everyone being offered the opportunity to handle a variety of creepy crawlies including a giant African land snail, a rat, a corn snake, a millipede, a leopard gecko, and a White's tree frog. There was also a chance to observe (but not hold) a Chilean rose tarantula!

"Having spent almost three months on placement at Paradise, I'd noticed how well residents respond to animals, so I was keen to get Zoolab in for a workshop," said James. "My OT degree course has highlighted the positive effects of animal assisted therapy and it was fantastic to see everyone engaging so enthusiastically with the ranger Emily and all the animals."

Tash Martin (Therapy Manager) said the Zoolab session had provided a fascinating learning experience for everyone. "Most of the residents held most of the animals and I'm pleased to say that no-one headed for the door at any point," she added.

The workshop proved to be such a big hit that there are plans to rebook the Zoolab team later this year.



“...it was fantastic to see everyone engaging so enthusiastically...”



Left to right:
Pamela and Jake
Harvey enjoying
an ice-cream
on Rodborough
Common
Andrew Kitching

FAMILY FORUM UPDATE

Members of the Family Forum are continuing to meet with the Paradise management team to discuss ways in which they can work together to enhance the care provided to residents.

The Forum provides parents and relatives with a safe and welcoming space to share experiences and access information and support.

Administrative responsibilities for the group are shared between Anita Bennett (mother of Isabel who lives in Four Seasons) and fellow steering committee members Andrew Kitching (father of Harvey who lives in Tobias) and Pamela Kay (mother of Jake from Oak and Pine).

More than a dozen family representatives attended the latest forum meeting with Tom Mackie (Registered Manager), Alison Hurlock (Head of Adult Services) and Marcus Rowland (Legal and Compliance Consultant) at Ebley House in December.

During discussions, families voiced the importance of being kept up to date with any significant developments at Paradise including new staff appointments or changes in existing staff roles as well the introduction of any new activities or initiatives being offered to residents.

"We're really pleased that Tom Mackie and his team have agreed to provide us with regular updates so that everyone can stay informed about any changes," said Anita. "As well as making us feel more connected to our family members, this type of information is particularly useful especially in terms of new activities as we're often best placed to know what residents have done in the past and might particularly enjoy so we can feed that back to their care workers who can then encourage them to get involved."

In response to a request for enhancing continuity of care, the meeting discussed the benefits of each resident having an assigned key worker to ensure that relatives have a dedicated point of contact for consistent and personalised updates on their family member's progress. Tom Mackie confirmed that that consideration would be given to this within the next few weeks.

Tom was also able to share that Deputy Managers Jackie Powell and Tim Presland had taken on some additional responsibilities with Jackie now in charge of medication, residents' activities and liaising with the NHS Community Liaison Disability Team while Tim is now tasked with conducting care reviews and implementing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

In other staff news, Debs Atkins has been promoted to Senior Adult Support Worker in Tobias Cottage and three new Occupational Therapy Assistants Saffron Jefferies, Adam Pompa and Adam Cook have recently started at Paradise and are leading a variety of well-attended practical skills workshops across the site.

Tom confirmed that an upgraded mobile phone system will soon be up and running in all houses providing families with a more accessible way to connect with residents. The meeting also heard that there were plans to develop greater links with local universities to arrange for social work students to carry out placements at Paradise which would further boost residents' wellbeing and potentially help with staff recruitment in the long term.

Marcus updated families on the upcoming round of placement fee negotiations with the 24 local authorities which have responsibility for funding Paradise residents. He explained that Novalis would be seeking a realistic uplift to cover increased staff wages and other operating costs. Families would be updated on developments via the forum, but Marcus was happy to answer any questions which families might have in the meantime. His email address is: marcus.rowland@novalis-trust.org.uk.

Anita thanked everyone for participating in the meeting. "Your valuable input helps to create a more supportive and connected community for the residents and their families," she said. "We look forward to further constructive meetings with Tom and Alison and other members of the senior management team in the future."

The next forum meeting will be held at Ebley House on Friday 23rd February.

Anyone who would like to join the steering committee or find out more information about the group can email the Family Forum on its new address: paradisehouseff@gmail.com or telephone Anita on 07779 768 076.

Milly! Welcome back

Novalis is delighted to welcome back former OT placement student Milly Dent who has recently accepted a full-time position with the Trust.

Milly – who brings to the role many years' experience of working with people with additional learning needs – is based at Paradise House on Fridays where she helps residents to identify and work towards goals which are important to them.

"I'm really enjoying working with the Paradise residents on a one-to-one basis focusing on how we can support them to have variety and meaning in their day and a sense of choice and empowerment over their lives," says Milly, who completed her BSc degree at UWE last summer.

"To do this, we've been working closely with the residents and the people who know them best to determine what's meaningful for them. Then we can identify and set realistic and achievable goals that build on their strengths and interests and improve their sense of wellbeing and quality of life."

Before starting her OT course, Milly spent six years working at a care home for people with learning disabilities. She has an older brother with Down's Syndrome so she's witnessed first-hand how occupational therapists can help people to live more independent lives and fulfil their potential. Having also worked as a telephone volunteer for the mental health charity Mind, she's also very aware of the importance of promoting psychological wellbeing within care home settings.

During the second year of her degree, Milly completed a placement at both Cotswold Chine School and William Morris College (now William Morris School) where she now spends the remainder of her working week. In her final year of university, she worked on a post-pandemic initiative which involved upskilling staff at residential and nursing homes who were providing care to people with dementia and learning disabilities.

Milly works closely with fellow Paradise OT Faye Longley and clinical therapy assistants Adam Pompa, Saffron Jefferies, Adam Cook and Caitlin Donovan to implement care plans for residents. These range from encouraging them to better express their personal strengths, goals, and care needs to arranging access to sensory aids such as weighted lap pads and motivating them to participate in the social groups and other activities on offer at Paradise.

"The therapy team are also working to support residents with the physical aspects of aging well which means supporting their mobility and making environmental adaptations to help them live safely," adds Milly.

"It's great to be back at the Trust because its trauma-informed ethos and the amazing work it does very much aligns with my own interests and values. I've always derived a lot of satisfaction from working with people who need help overcoming barriers in their life and I'm really pleased that my role at Novalis provides me with the perfect opportunity to this."





“Working here feels like being part of a big family”

NEW THERAPY MANAGER TASH FINDS HER GROOVE



Paradise’s new therapy manager **Natasha Martin** is a former dancer who’s passionate about using movement to improve people’s quality of life.

The Stroud-born graduate – known as Tash to residents and staff – joined Novalis after three and half years working as the lead for leisure and wellness in the dementia unit of a Tetbury residential care home.

She holds a degree in contemporary dance from Bath Spa University and a Masters in Somatic Movement Therapy from the University of Gloucestershire which she completed part-time over two years whilst working in her previous role.

Somatic therapy uses mind and body techniques to address physical and psychological symptoms. It’s commonly used to support people who’ve experienced trauma and Tash is looking forward to bringing her expertise in the field to Paradise in the coming months.

Since joining the Trust in July, Tash has been heading up Paradise’s therapy team whose members – therapeutic counsellor Gabi Pentzek, occupational therapists Faye Longley and Millie Dent, clinical therapy assistants Adam Cook, Saffron Jefferies and Adam Pompa and trainee clinical therapy assistants Caitlin Donovan and Eva Stefferson – have all been making her feel at home.

“It’s been great joining the Paradise team because the atmosphere here is so positive and happy,” she says. “The residents make my job easier because they’re always so enthusiastic about taking part in activities.”

Tash has been quick to make her mark in the short time she’s been at the Trust – she’s set up five new eight-week courses ranging from sessions on friendship, communication and sensory challenges to cooking and money skills groups.

“Our friendship group is geared towards building relationships between residents living in the different houses. It enables them to identify common interests and share experiences,” she says. “It also gives them the opportunity to practise conversation starters and how to hold down a conversation. There’s a real emphasis on asking each other questions and showing empathy towards one another.”

Mastering basic cookery skills is the focus of the cookery group which is run by Adam Pompa in Oak and Pine’s kitchen. Residents are encouraged to make hot drinks safely and rustle up simple meals such as beans on toast. “They really enjoy being able to make family members a cup of tea when they visit,” adds Tash.

Tash found that many of those living at Paradise had little concept of how money works and so the money skills group, led by and Saffron and Adam Cook, seeks to

tackle this by teaching simple addition and how to work out how much change is owed. At the end of the eight-week course, the residents get to practise what they’ve learned in the local community.

Specifically designed for non-verbal residents, the communication group involves working with small groups on key phrases and sign language. It’s also run by Adam Pompa, who’s Makaton qualified, and has led to the rolling out of a Paradise “sign of the week” with residents and staff practising new signs in their house group meetings.

Tash explains how the sensory group is helping to familiarise residents, particularly those with autism, with a wide variety of sensory experiences. “For instance, we might get them to explore a different item each week relating to touch, taste or smell,” she says. “The process can help to pinpoint someone’s likes and dislikes – perhaps they really like crunchy food for example – which might assist them to regulate themselves in stressful situations.”

Given Tash’s love of dance – she started ballet, jazz and tap classes at the age of three and is qualified to teach ballet – she hopes to be able to introduce more movement-based activities to Paradise House in the future.

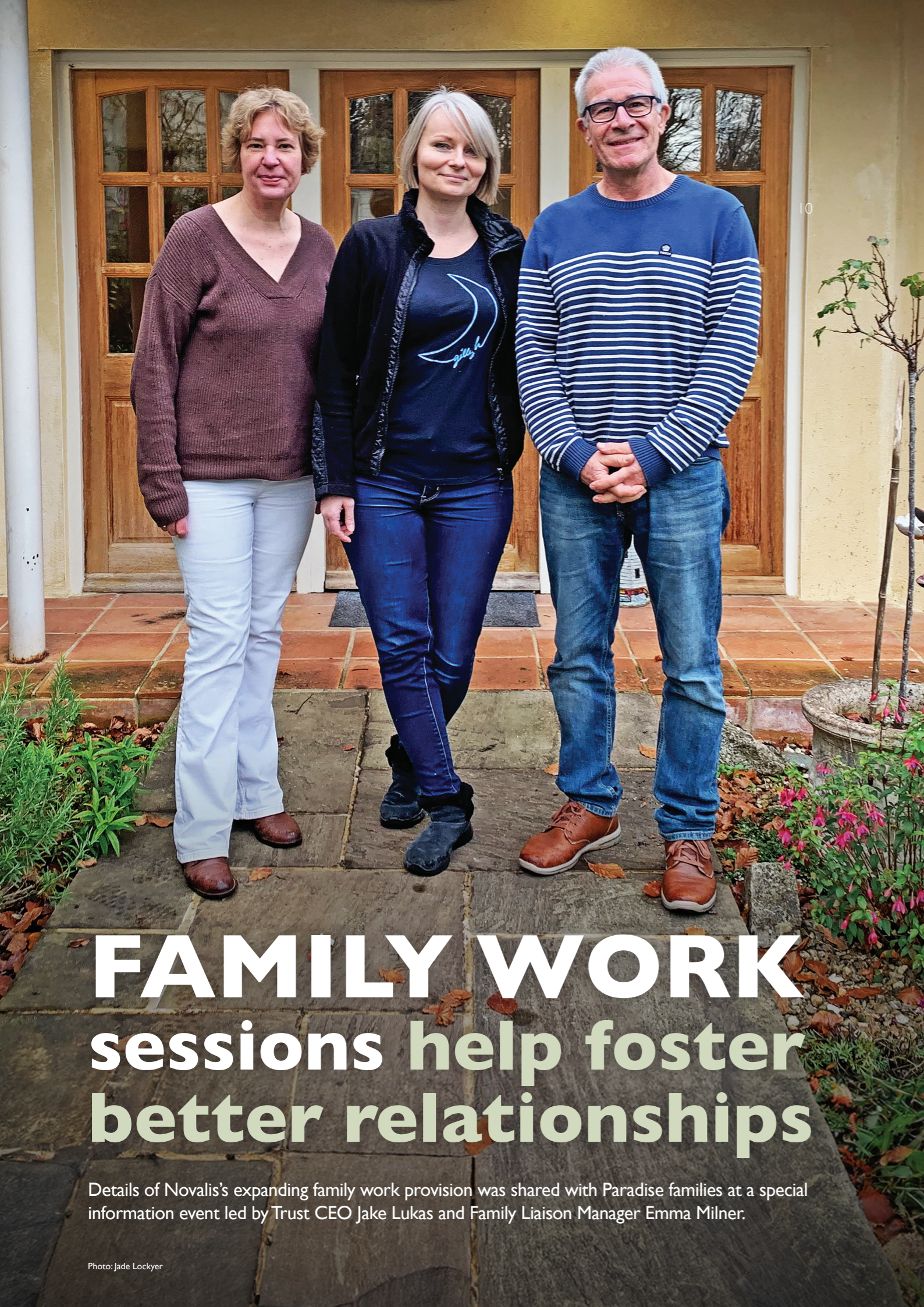
During her undergraduate degree in contemporary dance, she became particularly interested in the therapeutic benefits of movement which led to her doing a masters in Somatic Dance Therapy under Dr Amanda

Williamson who is one of the leading UK practitioners and academics in the field. Dr Williamson is the author of a number of research papers and has recently published a teaching manual in which Tash features.

“Practising somatic dance movements teaches you how to get in touch with yourself and develop coping skills when you experience emotions, stressors or trauma,” explains Tash. “It’s a healing method that assists with releasing old traumas and blockages in the body. Trauma and tension get stored in our bodies, often the neck, shoulders, and jaw, and can’t be fully released until we engage our bodies in certain ways.”

While Tash would probably put dance near the top of her list of talents, she is obviously no slouch on the football pitch. She was named one of the players of the match in a recent inaugural inter-staff football event at Stratford Park, an experience she really enjoyed.

“One of the best aspects of my job is being able to build up a strong rapport with staff as well as residents,” she says. “Working here feels like being part of a big family.”



FAMILY WORK sessions help foster better relationships

Details of Novalis's expanding family work provision was shared with Paradise families at a special information event led by Trust CEO Jake Lukas and Family Liaison Manager Emma Milner.

Photo: Jade Lockyer

Family work sessions – which have been available through the Trust since 2017 – can help to foster mutual understanding, enhance communication, resolve conflicts, and equip family members with effective tools for managing challenging situations.

“They’re a way of supporting residents and families by offering a safe space to be heard and to work through challenges together,” says Emma. “We’ve found they can be particularly helpful for dealing with tensions between family members, or when people feel that they’re not coping well as a family.”

The Novalis family work provision was established after US family therapist and social worker Dr Jeffrey Friedman visited the Trust to deliver training on the importance of working together to support the families of the adults and children in Novalis’s care.

“This work has continued to develop and over the past six years we’ve supported 45 families with regular family sessions, which has helped them to remain together and overcome issues,” says Jake, who as well as being the Trust’s CEO, is also a qualified social worker and family work practitioner.

After seeing the positive impact that family work was having throughout the Trust, Jake and Caroline Tebay (Deputy Chief CEO and Head of Clinical and Therapy Services) collaborated with Dr Friedman and US psychiatrist Dr Liz Kuh, to create a Level 4 Certificate in Family work. The certificate is now a nationally recognised qualification and a number of Novalis staff members have now either qualified as family work practitioners or are in the process of doing so.

“This is really exciting for us an organisation because we’re able to offer even greater levels of support to families,” says Emma. “We’ve been really heartened by the positive feedback we’ve received from those who’ve been engaging in family work sessions with us. Many of them have told us that family work has benefitted them by helping them to build stronger and more meaningful relationships.”

At Paradise there’s a dedicated team of family work specialists including Martin Stern (Consultant Psychotherapist), Gaby Pentzek (Therapeutic Counsellor) and Monika Slusarczyk (Willow House Manager). The trio regularly partner up with the Trust’s other family practitioners to work on specific cases.

Martin, who has been working with Novalis families for 18 years, has known some residents from the time they started as pupils at Cotswold Chine School or William Morris College (now William Morris School). He explains that Paradise residents and their families face particular challenges which can include issues around ageing and planning for the future as well as coping with bereavement.

“Some of the Paradise residents have been living here for decades and as a result we might be asked to help them and their families find ways of dealing with a range of issues which meet their particular set of circumstances,” says Martin. “For example, older parents might become distressed when they become too frail to visit their adult

children as much as they would wish to. Some have concerns about how their adult children will cope when they are no longer there. It can be a taboo subject, but it’s one that can be very helpful for us to talk about so that those affected can prepare for the next stage of life.”

The Paradise family work team also find themselves working with residents’ siblings or other family members who increasingly become the point of contact as parents grow older.

Sessions can either take place virtually or in-person in one of the welcoming Paradise House family rooms and may involve discussions, activities and exercises that encourage open communication and understanding.

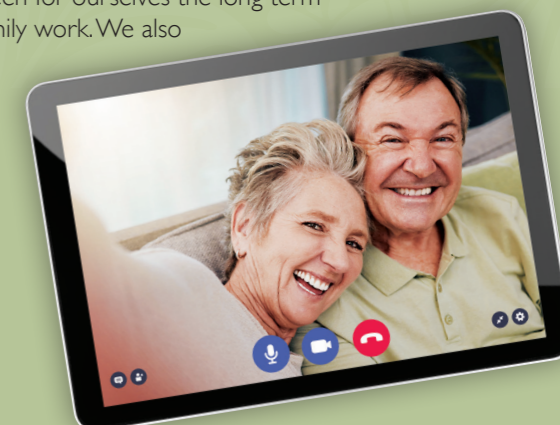
“This is really exciting for us an organisation because we’re able to offer even greater levels of support to families...”

“One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that we now realise the enormous advantages of being able to offer online therapeutic sessions,” says Martin. “It’s now possible for us to engage with families from all over the world. It also means that families are not constantly having to travel long distances which may be a barrier to some. We’ve also found that some residents and families may actually prefer to meet virtually because they can find in person sessions overwhelming.”

Residents and their families are able to make a request for family work sessions by filling out a form available from Emma Milner (emma.milner@novalis-trust.org.uk). The request is discussed at one of Novalis’s clinical therapy meetings where consideration is given to the most suitable practitioners to support the family.

As soon as two practitioners are assigned to a case, families are then asked to complete a questionnaire which gives the team an idea of the areas that the family might like to work on together as well as highlighting the challenges involved.

Jake says the Trust has seen the positive impact that family work has had on residents, children, and families. “Family work is supported by research as being effective on a variety of family outcomes, including reducing conflict and improving cohesion,” adds Jake. “At Novalis Trust, we’ve seen for ourselves the long term benefits of family work. We also know from the feedback we receive from families that engaging in family work has helped improve many people’s lives.”



In each issue of Paradise News, we'll be introducing you to one of the residents. In this edition, the spotlight is on Kirsteen from Oak and Pine!

DREAMS COME TRUE FOR ART-LOVING KIRSTEEN



When you ask Kirsteen – who's lived at Paradise for nearly 14 years – about her favourite hobbies she's quick to tell you how much she loves to spend time in one of the onsite art spaces.

The 32-year-old Oak and Pine resident has a passion for mindful colouring in and she's very fond of practising her immaculate handwriting. As the new Paradise arts programme takes shape she's also being encouraged to test out some of the new creative options on offer including printmaking on the recently installed state-of-the-art printing press.

As well as being a keen artist, Kirsteen is renowned for her love all things Disney so a recent visit to Disneyland Paris last year with fellow residents Carl, Donna, Isabel, Lucy, and Shelley was the stuff of dreams.

"When I went to Disney I high-fived Aladdin. Aladdin is one of my favourite Disney films," she says. "I went on lots of the rides, even the Tower of Terror. I stayed in the Davy Crockett ranch; it was really fun."

"Her eyes lit up from the moment she saw the Disneyland sign..."

Jackie Powell (Deputy Manager), who organised the trip, said that it was wonderful to witness Kirsteen's reaction when the Paradise group first arrived at the theme park.

"Her eyes lit up from the moment she saw the Disneyland sign and it was fantastic to see how excited she was as we all made our way down towards the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty castle," says Jackie. "It was the first time that Kirsteen

had been on a plane and a holiday abroad for quite a few years. It really was a magical experience for her and for all the residents who decided to make the trip."

Although Kirsteen has some mobility problems – she uses a walking frame which she and staff affectionately refer to as "Steady Eddy" – it didn't stop her exploring everything Disneyland had to offer. "We were so impressed with the way that Kirsteen managed to cover so much ground. She walked for hours some days," says Jackie.

When she's not taking advantage of the daily art activities at Paradise, Kirsteen keeps flexible by taking part in regular yoga sessions run by Paradise personal trainer Cameron Russell. She also enjoys trips to a number of offsite activities including weekly bingo and disco sessions in Gloucester run by the Kingfisher Treasure Seekers.

Family is an important part of Kirsteen's life too, and she looks forward to visits from her relatives who are based in Devon and Gloucestershire.

While Disneyland will always hold special memories for Kirsteen, she now has her sights set on yet another exciting adventure. This month she's off to immerse herself in the world of another one of her favourite fantasy characters when she travels to the Harry Potter studios in Watford with a group of Paradise residents and staff.





HOLD THE FRONT PAGE:

THE NEW PRINTING PRESS HAS ARRIVED!



A new state of the art printing press installed at Paradise House is making quite an impression!

The press – which has been set up in the redesigned art room – is being used by residents to create impactful images and patterns, most recently Christmas-themed cards, wrapping paper and jute bags to give as presents to friends and family.

Rachel's impressive turkey print (pictured) made up part of the scenery for Novalis's pantomime *Cinderella's Grumpy Turkey* which was staged at William Morris School in the run up to Christmas.

Paradise's art Co-ordinator Eppie Short, herself a practising printmaker, artist, and qualified teacher, says it's been exciting to see how well everyone is responding to learning new skills.

"The whole printmaking process of lifting, pressing and cutting is really beneficial for those who experience challenges with both gross and fine motor skills and co-ordination," she says. "It also provides plenty of

opportunities for sensory engagement because everyone can observe the mechanisms and movements of the press as well as the art we create."

Resident Hils Kemp, who is fast becoming one of Paradise's most enthusiastic printmakers, says she's enjoyed the opportunity to master a previously unfamiliar art technique. "I'm so excited about using the printing press," she adds. "I love turning the big wheels and rolling the ink. I really like trying something new."

Eppie explains that working together on printmaking projects is also helping visitors to the art room to develop friendships and improve their communication and teamwork skills.

"It's much easier to foster friendships and practise communication skills in an applied environment," she says. "We also use Makaton sign language during sessions which is helping to reinforce what residents are learning on the communication course being run by members of the therapy team."



Aloha

everyone



welcome to tropical Paradise!

Visitors to Paradise House one day last summer could be forgiven for thinking they'd stumbled onto the set of the TV show Hawaii Five-0!

That's because the site had been transformed into a vibrant tropical setting for a flamboyant Hawaiian-themed garden party.

prepared by the Trust's Domestic Manager Jane White and her team – had been a huge success.

Staff and residents – who dressed up in eye-catching floral print shirts, cool shades, and brightly coloured flower garlands – danced the afternoon away to a live ska band.

“It was an amazing day. We all had a lot of fun...”

All the revellers got up on their feet thanks to party guest and Zumba instructor Regina Spence who was on a mission to get everyone moving.

“It was an amazing day. We all had a lot of fun,” she added. “There were Hawaiian-themed games which included limbo dancing and Wac-A-Mole courtesy of careworker Skan. And Eden Café Manager Sarah made a fantastic cake decorated with gummy bears sunbathing under paper umbrellas.”

Tropical decorations – made by the residents with help from Daytime activities Leader Kirsty Nayegon-Bishop and her team – were the perfect backdrop to the festivities.

Caitlin Donovan (Adult Support Worker) and Eva Steffersen (Clinical Therapy Assistant) also helped everyone to get into the right mood with some skilfully applied face paints.

It sounds like it's going to be a tough act to follow for the team organising the next themed garden party event!

Beth Law (Senior Adult Activity Co-ordinator) said the garden party – which included a delicious buffet lunch





RESIDENTS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM WEEKLY ART TRIPS

An ongoing arts enrichment programme involving weekly visits to galleries, exhibitions and museums is helping to expand creative horizons.

Since Paradise's new Art Co-ordinator Eppie Short joined last summer, she's made it her mission to expose residents to different art mediums, techniques, and experiences.

This has led to the introduction of weekly inspirational art trips which have included visits to Bath Abbey to see the Gaia artwork featuring a three dimensional floating earth model with detailed NASA imagery of its surface and the Threads textile exhibition at Bristol's Arnolfini arts centre in which 21 contemporary artists focus on "breathing stories" into materials such as weaving, embroidery and knits.

There have also been tours of the Frozen Continent exhibition at the Cheltenham Museum which includes watercolours by Edward Wilson, who was a member of Captain Scott's Antarctic team, and the Royal West of England Academy's 170th annual open exhibition in Bristol which showcases some of the most exciting artists from across the UK and beyond.

"As a result of looking at art we've had interesting conversations and discovered more about ourselves..."

"Jade was particularly excited about our recent visit to the Gloucester Museum to view their costume collection from the 16th to the 20th century as she has a real passion for the Tudors and the Tudor era," says Eppie. "Another resident was really interested to meet the woodcarving artist behind some of the work displayed in the Museum in the Park in Stroud."

At the request of Jade, Hils and Harvey, there have also been visits to local churches and graveyards in Painswick, Slad and Bisley which inspired their Halloween themed

prints. Future trips are set to include the SS Great Britain, Cardiff Castle and St Fagans National Museum of History.

"Visiting new places is so beneficial," says Eppie. "As a result of looking at art we've had interesting conversations and discovered more about ourselves through it. Hils has been inspired to buy herself a video camera specifically to record all the places she visits on a Friday."

Eppie's next project is to equip the art room with smart tablets so that they can be taken on educational trips to capture the adults' thoughts and interpretations of artwork in real time.

"They'll also be able to quickly reference works of art and find out more about their favourite artists," says Eppie. "Most importantly, the tablets will also allow everyone to share their artwork with their families in the moment – that sense of immediacy will make the whole experience more meaningful for them."

Once smart screens are installed, Eppie is also looking forward to offering opportunities to get involved in digital art projects such as 'stop animation' which involves filming objects frame by frame so that they appear to be moving when played back at normal speed.

Until then there's still plenty to keep visitors to the art room stimulated and engaged. As well as recently installed new printing press, Eppie has set up a giant lightbox which can be used to do tracing, drawing, colouring in, and sand art, all of which has proved popular. She's also discovered that residents like listening to stories while they work so this is now part of the art room experience.

"I'm really enjoying getting to know the residents' individual characters and finding out what inspires them," says Eppie. "We've made a great start to our new Paradise arts programme, and we'll be gradually expanding what's on offer over the next few weeks and months."



"Visiting new places is so beneficial..."



OT STUDENTS HELP RESIDENTS LIVE THEIR BEST LIVES

Occupational therapy students Libby Vacara and James England have just completed a productive three-month placement at Paradise House.

The pair, pictured here following the recent Novalis staff football match, are in their final year of their BSc studies at UWE and both hail from Gloucestershire.

During their time with the Trust, they've been busy working with residents on a variety of tasks including teaching fall prevention techniques and assessing mobility needs and cooking and shopping skills.

Libby explained that she and James carried out an evaluation of the adults' fine motor, processing, and sequencing skills as they carried out kitchen-related tasks, conducting risk assessments and exploring options for safer cooking.

"Some may not be able to cook a full meal but perhaps they can make toast which gives them a real sense of independence," said Libby. "We've both found it very worthwhile looking at what interventions and strategies we can put in place to assist everyone," added James.

In addition to carrying out assessments, Libby also took on responsibility for leading weekly wellness groups focussing on topics ranging from sleep hygiene strategies and food and its relationship with mood to exercise and physical activity, mindfulness

and meditation and relationships and social participation.

James, whose previous placements have been with community-based therapy teams supporting people to remain independent within their own homes, has enjoyed getting creative with residents in Paradise's art rooms and sharing lunchtimes with them. He has a special interest in animal-assisted therapy and arranged for a team of animal handlers called Zoolab to visit Paradise just before Christmas.

Libby came to Paradise with experience of working with people with learning disabilities. She's a part-time carer for a boy with cerebral palsy and has worked for the learning disability charity Brandon Trust supporting a house of female residents.

"Paradise is such an inclusive community and we've been made to feel so welcome by all the residents and staff," said Libby. "It's been a rewarding experience being able to contribute to the residents' wellbeing," said James.

Novalis wishes both students all the best with the remainder of their studies and hopes to see them back at the Trust in future.

New wellbeing days promote healthy habits

A new series of wellbeing days aimed at promoting healthy habits is now up and running at Paradise House.

The first of the bimonthly events, which was launched in December, saw residents participating in activities ranging from yoga and introductory contemporary dance sessions to mini-football and relay races.

"Every single resident took part in our first wellbeing day which was all about getting everyone up and moving and having fun," said Tash Martin (Therapy Manager). "It was fantastic to see so many people going between the various stations which had been set up all over the site."

The sports-based activities, which were designed to tempt even the most unlikely athlete, included balloon and bat volleyball in the Main House lounge, mini football drills with Martin Shannon (Activity Co-ordinator), yoga sessions run by Cameron Russell (Paradise Personal Trainer) and introductory contemporary dance sessions with Tash.

For those in need of refuelling, Sarah Snell (Halfway Café manager) was on hand to help residents whizz up a choice of wholesome fruit smoothies. And in keeping with the wellbeing theme, Eppie Short (Art Co-ordinator) ran a session on fruit design hemp bag printing using the recently installed press.

The day concluded with relay races around the drive with Martin encouraging everyone to improve on their times. "Every resident ran the relay with a member of staff," added Tash. "Rachel actually completed it three or four times as she was absolutely determined to beat her previous record."

Tom Mackie (Registered Manager) said the health days will promote greater awareness of prioritising physical and mental health. "Our team have some really creative ideas for future events which I'm sure will get everyone thinking about even small things they can do to improve their health."

The next wellbeing day, which will focus on healthy foods, will be held in February.





FROM PARADISE TO THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH

Paradise residents experienced the magic of Disneyland Paris when they visited during the theme park's 30th anniversary year.

Carl, Donna, Isabel, Kirstie, Lucy and Shelly flew from Bristol to Paris for the five-night adventure where they stayed in Disney's Davy Crockett ranch, just 15 minutes' away from the main attractions. Jackie Powell (Deputy Manager) and care workers Cathy Thompson and William Cheetall made the trip with them.

"The residents were really enthusiastic about everything and put in the steps around the park despite the fact that the weather was regularly in the high 30s," says Jackie. "We were lucky that our accommodation at the Davy Crockett ranch had air conditioning which made everyone feel a lot more comfortable in the evenings."

All of the adults enjoyed trying out a dizzying array of rides which included Big Thunder Mountain, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Peril, King Arthur Carousel,

Les Voyages de Pinocchio, Stars Wars Hyperspace Mountain, and the Tower of Terror.



"The captain even made a special announcement..."

"On one of the evenings we watched the breathtaking Disney fireworks display and we all enjoyed the fabulous cuisine," added Jackie. "To cap off our holiday we were also able to celebrate staff member Will's 29th birthday. The captain even made a special announcement on the return flight – we all got a kick out of that."